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#### Vocabulary: memory 词汇: 记忆

What is your earliest memory? For me, I have a **hazy recollection** of standing in a leafy garden surrounded by **silver birch** trees when I was four years old.

I'm around average: some people remember events as far back as two years old, while for others, things seem **patchy** until seven or eight.



But what is consistent is that no one can remember their own birth or very early **infancy**. And even after the first memory, most of us only have a **sporadic** collection of **fleeting**, flickering mental images until much later in childhood.

The phenomenon is known as 'childhood **amnesia**', a term **coined** by the father of **psychoanalysis**, Sigmund Freud. So, what's going on here?

Babies are, writes Zaria Gorvett for BBC Future, "**sponges** for new information, forming 700 new **neural** connections every second and **wielding** language-learning skills to make the most **accomplished polyglot green with envy**".

And it's precisely this rapid mental development that causes the problem, according to a study by the University of Toronto in 2014. It found that the high rate of infant brain cell production could increase **forgetfulness**, because new cells **interfere** with existing mental circuits.

Another possible explanation is that the part of the brain that stores memories, the hippocampus, is not fully formed until around 18 months. Identity is also important: tests show infants don't recognise themselves in the mirror until they are around two years old.

Finally, there's the question of how accurate our early memories are at all. "People can pick up suggestions and begin to **visualise** them – they become like memories," psychologist Elizabeth Loftus told the BBC. Are our **cherished** first memories really just family stories?

## 词汇表

<b>hazy</b>	模糊的、不清晰的
<b>recollection</b>	记忆，往事
<b>silver birch</b>	白桦树
<b>patchy</b>	零零碎碎的，拼凑起来的
<b>infancy</b>	婴儿期、年幼时候
<b>sporadic</b>	零星的，分散的
<b>fleeting</b>	一闪而过的，短暂的
<b>amnesia</b>	失忆，健忘（症）
<b>to coin</b>	创造，杜撰（新词或表达）
<b>psychoanalysis</b>	精神分析学
<b>sponge</b>	像海绵般地吸收（信息）
<b>neural</b>	神经的
<b>to wield</b>	施加影响
<b>accomplished</b>	有造诣的，有才华的
<b>polyglot</b>	通晓多种语言的人
<b>green with envy</b>	非常羡慕，十分忌妒
<b>forgetfulness</b>	健忘
<b>to interfere</b>	干预，干涉
<b>to visualise</b>	设想，想象
<b>cherished</b>	珍惜的，珍贵的

## 测验与练习

### 1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Why can't people remember the first years of their lives?
2. What does it mean to be a 'sponge for new information'?
3. True or false? *Babies are accomplished polyglots.*
4. Which word means 'very green and covered in plants'?
5. Why might our earliest memories actually be false?

### 2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. My memory of the party is a bit \_\_\_\_\_.

flickering	patched	hazy	amnesia
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2. \_\_\_\_\_ don't form lasting memories.

Childhood	Infant	Infancy	Infants
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3. Brian is very \_\_\_\_\_. He can't remember what he ate for lunch!

forgetful	forgetfulness	forgettable	forgotten
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4. Wang Li is like a \_\_\_\_\_. She learned how to use HTML in a week.

psychoanalyst	sponge	hippocampus	polyglot
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5. People say that if you can \_\_\_\_\_ success, it makes you more likely to be successful.

coin	interfere with	visualise	wield
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## 答案

### 1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

#### 1. Why can't people remember the first years of their lives?

**Three reasons are given. Firstly, in the first years of our lives our brains are growing so fast that new brain cells interfere with existing mental circuits. Secondly, the hippocampus is not fully formed until 18 months old. Thirdly, babies don't develop a sense of identity until around two years old.**

#### 2. What does it mean to be a 'sponge for new information'?

**Being a 'sponge' means you acquire a lot of new information very quickly, the same way a sponge fills with water.**

#### 3. True or false? *Babies are accomplished polyglots.*

**False. Although babies learn languages very fast, an 'accomplished polyglot' is someone who has learned several languages to a very high level.**

#### 4. Which word means 'very green and covered in plants'?

**Leafy.**

#### 5. Why might our earliest memories actually be false?

**According to Elizabeth Loftus, people pick up suggestions and visualise them - this makes these mental images seem like memories.**

### 2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. My memory of the party is a bit **hazy**.

2. **Infants** don't form lasting memories.

3. Brian is very **forgetful**. He can't remember what he ate for lunch!

4. Wang Li is like a **sponge**. She learned how to use HTML in a week.

5. People say that if you can **visualise** success, it makes you more likely to be successful.